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III.—NOTES ON THE LANGUAGE OF THE EASTERN ALGONKIN TRIBES.

Surprisingly little attention has been given by linguists to the Indian languages of this country, compared with the wide range of their investigations in other directions. Not only is this true with regard to the languages of the Indians, but also with regard to their history. Very few either know anything of or evince any interest in the peculiarities of our tribes, and this is the more to be regretted because with the last Indian the last hope of investigation will perish, for these people keep no records and have no desire to leave any traces behind them.

The sole remnants of the great Wabanaki Nation, which have been allowed to linger about their former habitations, are the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot tribes of Maine, the Malisits and Micmacs of New Brunswick, and the Abenakis or St. Francis Indians of Lower Canada. All these Indians speak closely allied dialects, which, although bearing a general resemblance to each other in construction, are often very different in the individual words. As an illustration of the similarity and differentiation of these dialects I give below a list of the numerals up to ten, in three of the idioms :

<i>Passamaquoddy.</i>	<i>Abenaki.</i>	<i>Micmac.</i>
neqt (besq)	pazekw	naookt
taboo (neswuk)	nis	tāāboo
sist (nowuk)	nas	sist
neŭ	iaw	neu
nan	nolan (nonnoak)	nan
kamachin	ngüedoz	yusookom
l'wigruk	tobawoz	eloowignuk
ogmulchin	nsōzek	ogūmulchin
esq'nadek	noliwi	peskoonadek
m'tlen	m'dala	'mtulun

The Abenakis, whose dialect appears in the table to be the most distinct, have rarely, if ever, any intercourse with the remaining Wabanaki, and, as they live surrounded by alien tribes, one cannot wonder that their language has departed somewhat from

its original form. I have been told, however, by Abenakis, that the Passamaquoddy and Penobscot dialects are intelligible to them when spoken very slowly, and I have also heard Passamaquoddies state that they could scarcely understand Micmac at all, as the intonation of the language is entirely different. This is not surprising, for although the Micmacs live comparatively near the others, they are very conservative and never mingle. The three tribes, whose dialects are so closely allied as hardly to deserve the name of separate languages, are the Passamaquoddy, Penobscot, and Malisit.

This is easy to account for, as the Malisits are on most friendly terms with the other two, and are quite frequently to be found in Bar Harbor, selling baskets and trading very amicably along with them.

As these dialects are radically the same, the phonology and grammar are, of course, identical in all of them, for although the forms of words have differentiated, yet the sounds have remained almost unaltered, and only in a very few cases have the grammatical forms changed. Therefore we may take it for granted that whatever general principle or characteristic might be alleged of one of these languages is perfectly applicable to the others. The Passamaquoddy and Abenaki dialects are those which I have made the most use of, as they are excellent specimens to illustrate the character of the entire group.

The vowel sounds are very unclear and indistinct; indeed it is often difficult to distinguish them, for the Indians speak with the mouth half open and seldom loudly. A, e, i, o, u (continental pronunciation) are usually easy to recognize, but there are many sounds whose exact character is very difficult to discover.

The first which we shall notice is the diphthong, which I have written *æw*. This conveys little idea of its exact pronunciation, but is the nearest approach to the sound which a combination of letters can reach. If the vowels $\bar{e} + \bar{u}$ be pronounced very rapidly, giving to each the same value, some idea of the sound can be obtained. The pronunciation of the Old English diphthong *æw* (cf. *sæw* = sea) must have approached this very closely. A somewhat similar sound may be heard when our exclamation *oh!* is uttered sarcastically from one side of the mouth.

L, *m*, and *n* are semi-vowels, as in some of the Slavonic languages, containing a sound like a short, thick \bar{u} . This is the case in all

the dialects of this group, but the sound is often written with an *e*, *u*, and even an *i*, by those who have not recognized its true character. Thus, in the table of numerals cited above, the Passamaquoddy *l'wig'nuk* (7) is often wrongly written *ul'wig'nuk*. Nothing is so deceptive as the thick guttural utterance of an Indian, and I have frequently spelt the same word in two or three ways as the sound impressed itself differently on my ear. It is often the case in Indian languages that exactly the same combination of sounds will be heard and interpreted differently by different individuals.

There is an indistinct vowel sound which resembles a very short *u*; it is heard generally after the guttural *g*, and may be expressed by an apostrophe: *g'*. In the numeral *l'wig'nuk* it is heard very plainly between the *g* and the *n*, and also, but not so distinctly, between the *l* and the *w*. It is not unlike the Hebrew vocal Sh'va in the word שָׁוִי, where a short vowel is heard between ש and ו. When an Indian is speaking, however, he slurs this sound to such a degree that it was not until after one week of careful observation that I even discovered its existence.

Last, but by no means least of these peculiar vowel sounds is the initial whistle or *wh'*, which, to be thoroughly understood, must be heard from the lips of an Indian. It is produced by a forcible expulsion of the breath through the lips, which must be rounded as if to pronounce the vowel *o*. This makes a sound as if the speaker had begun to whistle but had suddenly ceased. Whether this utterance may be classified as a pure vowel or not is a question of some doubt, for it certainly partakes of the nature of the consonantal *w*.

Among the consonants the explosives *p*, *t*, and *k* require particular notice. In English, and in fact in most European languages, whenever an explosive is uttered, a gentle breathing is inserted between the consonant and the succeeding vowel. In the Indian dialects the explosive is pronounced with absolutely no breathing, so that it is often impossible to distinguish between a *k* and a *g*, or between a *p* and a *b*; thus *gad* and *kat* represent the same sound. The indistinctness of pronunciation, therefore, is not at all confined to the vowels, for these peculiar voiceless consonants produce a most puzzling effect on the hearer, and render the sound of the language metallic and monotonous to the last degree. *Th*, *f*, and *r* are wanting.

One of the most remarkable sounds imaginable is the guttural

-*q* or -*kw*. This occurs only at the end of syllables and is very soft in utterance; so much so as to be often almost inaudible. It is formed by beginning a *q* and stopping suddenly before the following *u*-vowel is entirely pronounced. Many express it by *kw*, and equally well, but as the sound is undoubtedly a single consonant, it seems more logical to express it by a single symbol.

The accentuation of these dialects is not well marked, for the tendency in speaking is to drawl the sentences in a monotone, giving much the same value to every syllable. At the end of sentences the voice is allowed to fall, not, however, as in European languages, but more as if all the wind were expelled from the lungs and the speaker were forced to stop through exhaustion. Although in conversation the accentuation is monotonous, yet in the songs and rhymes, more particularly in the magic formulae, it is of the highest importance to intone correctly. In fact, the virtue of the charm depends frequently on the way it is said. The variations of some of these songs are so very difficult that it is impossible for a white man ever to learn them exactly. Sometimes even in conversation the position of voice stress affects the meaning; cf. *kiskes igdn* = how many years?—but *kiskes igdñ* = how old? Very subtle distinctions in accent are observed in speech making; in fact it is by such means that the orator produces an effect or renders his meaning more emphatic.

The Indian languages are apparently very irregular in character, but, after a careful examination of the grammatic structure, much of the seeming difficulty vanishes. Throughout the entire inflectional system a distinction is made between animate and inanimate objects; in fact this may be said to be one of the ground principles of the language. There are separate forms in the substantive, adjective, and verb for these two classes, yet actual gender is not recognized. The pronominal prefixes remain the same whether before substantives or verbs; thus *n'mitauks* = my father, or *n'mitzi* = I eat. *n'* is the universal sign of the first person, while *k'* and *w'* represent the second and third persons. To distinguish between the singular and plural the substantives have one set of endings and the verbs another; thus *n'mitaukson* = our father, while *n'dupultiben* = we sit, from *n'dup* = I sit. In the first person plural a distinction is made whether all those addressed are included or not; thus *n'mitaukson* = our father (exclusive), i. e. the father of two or more of us, but *k'mitaukson* = our father (inclusive), viz. the father of all of us. This idea is

carried throughout the entire inflection. Substantives may be transformed to verbs and carried through all the intricacies of the conjugation. Thus from *n'kaozem* = my cow, we have the verb *n'okaozemi* = I have a cow. In the same way adjectives may be used verbally. Almost any idea whatever, no matter how subtle, may be expressed by an Indian verb, for the extremely ductile character of the language admits of a myriad of forms. The numerals are copiously inflected according to the idea they convey; thus we have *pazeq* = one, *papazego* = one by one, *pazgueda* = once, *papazgueda* = once each time, *nitamabil* = first, but *nitamagingñak* = first, if used to mark the order of chapters, verses, etc. The cardinal numbers also have two forms, a substantival and an adjectival: *tabū* = two, but *nezwuk* = two in the adjectival sense, as *nezwuk skitapyik* = two men. To illustrate the similarity of inflection in the various dialects I give the following table of examples in the Passamaquoddy, Micmac, and Abenaki languages:

	<i>Passamaquoddy.</i>	<i>Abenaki.</i>	<i>Micmac.</i>
	<i>nmitauks</i> , my father	<i>n'mitogwes</i> , my father	<i>neloo</i> , my food
	<i>k'mitauks</i> , thy "	<i>k'mitogwes</i> , thy "	<i>keloo</i> , thy "
	<i>w'mitauksl</i> , his, her father	<i>w'mitogsa</i> , thy "	<i>weloo</i> , his, her food
excl.	<i>n'mitauksn</i> , our "	<i>n'mitogsena</i> , our "	<i>na-oochit</i> , our father
incl.	<i>k'mitauksn</i> , " "	<i>k'mitogsena</i> , " "	<i>kesolq</i> , our creator
	<i>k'mitauksl</i> , your "	<i>k'mitogsowo</i> , your "	<i>ukwisl</i> , your son
	<i>w'mitauksl</i> , their "	<i>w'mitogsowo</i> , their "	<i>weloo-ül</i> , their food
	<i>n'dup</i> , I sit	<i>n'wajono</i> , I have	<i>saukawei</i> , I am quiet
	<i>k'dup</i> , thou sittest	<i>k'wajono</i> , etc.	<i>saukēwēin</i> , etc.
	<i>ubo</i> , he, she sits	<i>wajona</i>	<i>saukēwēik</i>
excl.	<i>k'dupullibin</i> , we sit	<i>n'wajonobena</i>	<i>saukēwōltiq</i>
incl.	<i>k'dupibin</i> , " "	<i>k'wajonobena</i>	<i>saukēwōltik</i>
	<i>ubultu-uk</i> , they "	<i>wajonak</i>	<i>saukēwōltijik</i>

It will be seen from this table that the Micmac dialect has differentiated most in grammatic form. It has kept the pronominal prefixes in the inflexion of the substantive, yet in the conjugation of the verb they have fallen away and been replaced by endings. This fact may be due to the influence of the Esquimaux, as the Micmacs had at one time considerable intercourse with that people, and some effect must have been thus produced on the language, isolated from their kindred as they were both by geographical position and by ceaseless feuds.

Indian words are often small sentences in themselves; thus *n'wenochwas-queiss* = I row. This contains the Penobscot *wenoch*,

a white man, and taken as a verb with the first personal prefix *n'* signifies I paddle (a boat) like a white man. The character of these languages is most favorable to word-formation, and their peculiarity of retaining only the elements and rejecting all superfluous parts renders it possible to have a sentence of considerable length melted together in one word. By means of this formative power of his language the Indian can express any idea, no matter how abstruse, and indeed he often expresses very simple things in a rather abstruse way. Thus, *wik-peq-higen* = a pump; the elements of this are the root *wik-peq* from *n'wikson* or *n'wikpeq* = I draw or pull, and *higen*, which is a substantive ending, the whole word meaning something which one pulls, or briefly, a pump. In this case the idea of pulling, connected with a pump, seized the Indian mind, and therefore the above word was made to express this object, although it might with equal appropriateness have been called a 'water-giver' or a 'pipe from which to drink,' etc. The word for book, *wig-higen*, is another instance of this peculiar formative system. The stem $\sqrt{\text{wig}}$ means to cut or to scratch, and when the Indians became acquainted with the art of writing, and perceived that it was done by means of a sharp instrument, this root received the additional meaning 'to write.' *Wig-higen* therefore signifies something which is written, i. e. a letter or a book. From this noun comes the compound *wighig'nup*, which means book-water, a rather quaint metaphor for ink. As an illustration of how a single root appears in a number of words of allied meaning compare the following:

<i>pes-yantesuk</i> = a window	} $\sqrt{\text{pes}}$ = light.
<i>pes-saükhenmagen</i> = a lamp	
<i>pes-zezen</i> = a star	
<i>n'p'saq</i> = I shine	

The verb *n'pesatün*, I smell, undoubtedly contains *wilön* = a nose.

An analysis of an ordinary verb into its elements will give an excellent idea of this Indian method of word building. *Nolidhas* means 'I am glad.' This contains: *n'*, pronominal prefix of the first person, *wole*, good, excellent, and *klidahas*, the verb 'to think.' The *w'*, which is always unstable in these dialects, is rejected. For another instance of this cf. *wigwus*, mother, but *nigwus*, my mother. The *k* in *klidahas* is forced out by the predominance of the two *l*'s in '*ole* and '*lidahas*. It might here be stated that the

Indian *l* is very marked, and has a thick dull sound which is seldom heard in European languages. Two *l*'s, therefore, literally drown out the *k*. This gives the form *nolidhas*, 'I think well, I am in a good state of mind, I am glad.'

Such then, briefly considered, are the chief points of interest in the language of the Wabanaki. As far as I could discover, very little attention has ever been given to these tribes beyond the mere compiling of a comparative dictionary by Father Vetromile. No thorough grammatical treatise seems ever to have been written, and, therefore, it was solely from the mouths of the Indians in Bar Harbor and Canada that I gathered the above information. If able linguists were to examine with care the word-formation of some of these dialects, considerable light might be thrown on the entire group of American tongues, and perhaps nowhere on our continent can a better example of the general character of Indian languages be found than in these races of the Algonkin Indians.

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